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Commentary

Blacks in U.S. History

by
Wornie L. Reed

During Black History Month many people paused to discuss and reflect on the presence and the contributions of African-Americans in the history of the United States. During February two years ago we had a visit from a white Navy veteran from nearby Quincy, Massachusetts, who had his own black history story—although he did not express it as such.

Quincy, a city of some 85,000 people, has one of the lowest percentages of blacks of any city its size in the country. In this setting, and perhaps others, this man had grown weary of hearing his friends and acquaintences characterize blacks as contributing relatively little to this country. So he brought in a yellowed newspaper clipping that described the heroics of some black Navy personnel on his aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. *Essex*, when it was attacked during World War II.

Although black men on the carrier were consigned to mess hall and similar duties and were not permitted to hold combat positions, they had badgered their superiors for the opportunity to participate directly in the fighting. Consequently, several of them were manning the anti-aircraft guns when the ship was attacked by a Japanese suicide pilot. Eight of the men were killed as they stuck by their guns and continued firing at the plane until it crashed into the ship. Pictures of the action show that not one of the men wavered or left his position in spite of the almost certain disaster.

The actions of the blacks in this episode appear to be typical. Throughout the history of this country, blacks have fought valiantly in the battles of America. Some 5,000 blacks fought in the Revolutionary War, some of them coming from as far away as Haiti. Blacks were at Lexington and at Concord. In fact, they fought in practically all of the big battles of the war. Two made the famous Delaware crossing with Washington.

And, of course, blacks fought in the Civil War. By the end of the war there were over 186,000 black soldiers in the Union ranks. During World War I, while reported lynchings in America totaled 54 in 1916, 38 in 1917, 64 in 1918, and 83 in 1919, and black leaders were trying in vain to get U.S. presidents to make statements against lynching, some 370,000 black soldiers fought in Europe, then returned home to more than 20 major race riots across the country. White mobs were attacking blacks in city after city because blacks were working in factories at jobs that were previously reserved for whites.

During World War II, with over one million black soldiers participating, there were major black combat air units. Approximately 600 black pilots received their wings before the end of the war with more than eight winning the Distinguished Flying Cross. This group destroyed 111 enemy planes in the air and 150 on the ground.

In this issue Philip S. Hart, sociologist and filmmaker, provides a personal account of how he developed a television documentary to tell the story of the early black aviators who created pathways for the exploits of black pilots in World War II.

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Telling the Story of the Early Black Aviators

by
Philip S. Hart

The story of America's early black aviators from the 1920s and 1930s has been one of the neglected themes in American aviation history. My interest in this topic began with research into family history. My mother's uncle, J. Herman Banning, was a pioneer black aviator during this nation's Golden Age of Aviation. I remember my mother, aunt, and grandmother talking about J. Herman Banning back when I was little, and in my teenage years I tried to find out more than I had learned from these family stories and photographs, but it was difficult for me to locate any information about Banning or any of his peers from the usual sources.

As I continued my education I continued to pursue the history of Banning and other blacks from this era, but the process proved to be very discouraging. It was not until the late 1970s, when I found out that the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum was thinking of organizing an exhibit on America's early black aviators, that I became optimistic.

When the National Air and Space Museum, under the guidance of curators Von Hardesty and Dom Pisano, began their search, they did not believe that enough material existed to mount a permanent exhibit. Their plan was to mount a temporary exhibit. However, when the news that Air and Space was planning such an exhibit became public, people like myself, with an interest in black aviators, came out of the woodwork. In short, the Museum was able to collect enough material to mount a permanent exhibit, and the "Black Wings Exhibit" opened in September of 1982 to critical acclaim. There was considerable media coverage from around the globe. The exhibit consisted of three sections: The Pioneers, World War II and the Tuskegee Airmen, and Blacks in Modern Aviation. I served as an adviser for the Pioneers section, contributing photographs and other memorabilia from the 1920s and 1930s related to Banning and his peers. The exhibit has proven so popular that three traveling exhibits were put together by the Smithsonian Institute Traveling Exhibit Service to tour the country.

The story of America's early black aviators from the 1920s and 1930s has been one of the neglected themes in American aviation history. My interest in this topic began with research into family history.

One of the things my research revealed about the pioneers was that there had been no visual documentation of their contributions to American aviation history before the Air and Space Museum exhibit. The fact that the exhibit is on permanent display at the Museum is no small feat, as the Air and Space Museum is the most popular museum in the world. But there was a need for a film to tell the story of America's black aviation pioneers. Having a background as a filmmaker as well as a scholar, I decided to correct this oversight, and I put together a 60-minute documentary on America's early black aviators for television.

Using my own funds as seed money, I was able to secure a research and development grant from the California Council for the Humanities. These funds were matched by UCLA, where I was spending part of my sabbatical year. Los Angeles was one of two centers of black aviation activity during the 1920s—Chicago was the other—so my year in Los Angeles allowed me to further my research into this topic.

Many of the key individuals, and family members of key individuals, reside in the Los Angeles area. I was able to locate several of them in and around Los Angeles. After making contact with them I would schedule a time to meet with them and talk about their experiences from 50 and 60 years ago. I would also review their photographic collections and other memorabilia they had preserved. Generally, I found these individuals to be very eager to assist me and very willing to share their memories and photographs. I also found a bitterness among them. They felt that they had made a contribution to American aviation history and that their contribution had been ignored.

On my second visit I would bring an audio tape in order to conduct an interview. For the most part,

even though we are talking about people in their late 70s and early 80s, I found them to be alert and lively. Their level of excitement and energy helped lift me up. They knew that I intended to produce a television documentary, and they wanted to assure themselves that it would be accurate and honest.

Courtesy of Philip S. Hart

Thomas C. Allen and J. Herman Banning after completing first transcontinental flight by black aviators, October 1932

They developed a trust in me, particularly since they realized that I was a descendant of probably the most famous black flyer of this era, a person who was referred to in the black press as "the suntanned Lindbergh." However, it was clear that they harbored a bitterness toward aviation historians, television producers, and society in general for ignoring them and their history.

Before the exhibit at the Smithsonian Institute, before my television documentary "Flyers In Search of a Dream," many people knew about the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II. But few were aware that black pilots were making transcontinental flights and performing in air shows in the 1920s and 1930s. The documentary chronicles black pilots based in two major cities—Los Angeles and Chicago. Seven notable figures emerged in those early years.[1]

Bessie Coleman was the first black person licensed to fly. She trained in France and received her license there in 1922, as there was greater tolerance in France for black aviators than there was in the United States. Afterward she barnstormed for four years in the United States before dying in a 1926 crash at the age of 33.

James Herman Banning spent two years at Iowa State College before traveling to Chicago to enroll in aviation school. Racial barriers prohibited him from getting training in Chicago, so he returned to Iowa where he trained with a retired army officer and gained his license in 1926. He barnstormed for three years before joining the Los Angeles-based Bessie Coleman Aero Club in 1929. Less than a year after making the first transcontinental flight by a black (1932), Banning died at age 32 in a San Diego crash.

William J. Powell organized the Coleman Aero Club to draw blacks into aviation. In 1934 he published the book *Black Wings,* urging blacks to "fill the air with black wings" as a way of elevating black status, thinking that by conquering this relatively new field blacks might gain more standing in the wider American society.

Marie Dickerson Coker, now over 80 years old, was the only female pilot in the five member "Blackbirds" precision and stunt flying team of Los Angeles. This group performed throughout the early 1930s.

Harold Hurd, now 75 years of age, flew in the mid-1930s with the Chicago-based group. He had the distinction of graduating with the first group of black trainees from the Curtis-Wright Aeronautical School. After earning his pilot's license from Chicago's Harlem Airport, Hurd flew there before entering the U.S. Army Air Force as a sergeant major, training black pilots at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

Cornelius Coffey, one of the oldest surviving black aviators at 85, was another Chicago-based pilot, and he established the Coffey School of Aeronautics to promote black participation in aviation. He also organized the first black airfield in Robbins, Illinois, where he trained pilots.

Courtesy of Philip S. Hart

Willa Brown (right), early aviator and Director of Public Relations for the Coffey School

Hurbert Julian, a flamboyant character who called himself the "Black Eagle," was one of the more famous black pilots of the 1930s. He courted publicity through his stunt flying and his unusual promotion antics, once parachuting into Harlem clothed in a brightly-colored cape.

In 1939 black airmen were admitted into the Civilian Pilot Training Program, which provided a contingent of pilots for wartime emergencies. Gradually training was becoming more available to blacks, with six black colleges and two flying schools offering flight instructions.

In 1941 Congress created the all-black 99th Fighter Squadron, and Tuskegee Army Air Field was opened soon thereafter with the first black military pilots being admitted to training in July of 1941. The 332nd Fighter Group, flying over Italy, Germany, and Eastern Europe, had the mission of escorting air force bombers. This unit became a source of pride for all black pilots, as they maintained a perfect record for safe escort.

As for funding my project, after completing the script with research and development funding from the California Council and UCLA, I received a matching grant from the Council for production and post-production. UCLA provided a partial match for the Council funds. The University of Massachusetts also provided a portion of the match. However, despite all my efforts, I was unable to secure any corporate support for this project. The negative experience of dealing with corporate America is probably the most distasteful aspect of this particular project for me. I found a complete lack of interest in funding a project that depicted blacks playing a pro-active role in a technical field.

I approached airline companies, aircraft manufacturers, and other corporate underwriters with a history of supporting public television programming. There was no corporation that said the idea was no good, but no corporation provided a grant to help bring this neglected story of blacks participating in a technical field to television. In addition, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting turned down three requests for funding.

I found a complete lack of interest in funding a project that depicted blacks playing a pro-active role in a technical field.

I ended up using a considerable amount of my own money to complete the 60-minute documentary. The final budget for this film was in the $250,000-$300,000 range. The underwriters were the California Council for the Humanities, UCLA, WGBH Education Foundation, University of Massachusetts, the non-profit Community Development Corporation of Boston, with my funds filling in the cracks whenever a shortfall occurred. The average 60-minute documentary on public television costs in the $400,000-$500,000 range. It is very unusual to have a program air on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) without corporate support.

American television, whether commercial or public, has aired next to nothing in which blacks are seen playing a pro-active role relative to a technical field such as aviation. It is no wonder that black youngsters do not strive to move into the technical fields in our society. Research indicates that black youngsters in particular, and black households in general, are among the heaviest television viewers. For the most part, these television viewers have seen virtually nothing on American television that depicts

Class in aeronautical training at Curtis-Wright Flying School, Chicago, January 1932 *Courtesy of Philip S. Hart*

black people in technical fields. Despite these odds, I was able to bring this story to public television. The film is now being distributed in the United States and Canada by PBS Video.

"Flyers In Search of a Dream" remains a rare commodity. It tells the story of black men and women playing a role in aviation during the early years of this burgeoning industry. I would like to see more such programs on television. However, I am discouraged by the response of corporate America, which seems more willing to reinforce prevailing stereotypes than to break new ground. The story of America's early black aviators is an old story. However, it is actually a new story as far as most Americans are concerned.

American television, whether commercial or public, has aired next to nothing in which blacks are seen playing a pro-active role relative to a technical field such as aviation.

I have received mostly positive feedback from the pioneers and from the general audience. The program received very good ratings both in Boston and in cities around the country. The film is now in the Smithsonian archives, as well as the television and film archives at UCLA. I have been able to bring the story of my uncle and his peers to a broad worldwide audience. They are at last receiving the kind of recognition they should have received years ago.

I challenge corporate America and American television to pay more attention to depicting blacks in pro-active roles relative to technical fields. There is a big void in this area. There is a big piece missing in American history in this regard. My work helped fill one big hole. I hope it can stimulate others to identify and fill other holes. But in order to do this effectively, resources and a commitment from the broader community are essential.

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Philip S. Hart is a professor of Sociology and Public Service at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. This article is the revised version of a presentation made at the Annual Meeting of the Oral History Association, October 13-16, 1988.

Miscegenation and Acculturation in the Narragansett Country of Rhode Island, 1710-1790

by
Rhett S. Jones

The histories of most New England states view blacks as a strange, foreign people enslaved in southern states, whom New Englanders rescued first by forming colonization and abolitionist societies and later by fighting a Civil War to free them. The existence of a black population in New England as early as the seventeenth century has been pretty much ignored. Indeed Anderson and Marten, of the Parting Ways Museum of Afro-American Ethnohistory, touched off a furor with their discovery that Abraham Pearse, one of the early residents of Plymouth Colony, was black.[1]

The long neglect of New England's black history has recently come to an end. Historical societies in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island have been formed to facilitate the study of black life in the colonial era as well as in later periods. A number of these organizations—notably the African Meeting House Museum, the Parting Ways Museum of Afro-American Ethnohistory, and the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society—have won national awards and acclaim. The scholarly literature now reflects this new interest in New England blacks. Carvalho's *Black Families in Hampden Country, 1650-1855*, while not strictly speaking a history, provides much useful insight into black life.[2] Randolph Domonic presented a paper reflecting his work on the Abyssinian Church of Portland, Maine,[3] and Randolph Stakeman has two articles forthcoming on black life in New England's largest state.[4] Cottrol explores the history of blacks in Providence before the Civil War, while Horton examines Boston during the same period.[5] Coughtry and Jones have each published articles on Rhode Island blacks.[6] The present work is part of growing scholarly interest in New England's colonial black past.

Race, Economics, and Miscegenation

The Narragansett Country of southern Rhode Island, located along the western coast of Narragansett Bay and including such present day communities as South Kingston, North Kingston, Wickford, Wakefield, Peacedale, Narragansett, and Charlestown, was a center of black life in eighteenth century New England. In 1755 one in every three residents of South Kingstown was a black slave, while in the same year there were 712 whites and 418 blacks in Charlestown. For much of the eighteenth century, half the slaves in the tiny colony lived in the Narragansett Country, with South Kingstown alone having about a fourth of all the slaves in Rhode Island.[7] While the two Kingstowns were home to large numbers of slaves and a number of free blacks as well, Charlestown was home to more than 400 of Rhode Island's 1,100 slaves at mid-century.[8] Slavery flourished in what is now called by Rhode Islanders South County for a number of reasons.

First, there was the climate itself. According to Miller, weather in the Narragansett Country was considered among the best in England's northern colonies because of the even distribution of rain through three of the seasons and because of light snowfall in the winter.[9] The land itself is gently rolling and so well supplied with rocks as to make possible the building of innumerable stone walls. So numerous were these rocky walls that it was long argued by historians that Rhode Islanders were driven out of farming and to the sea by the inhospitable land. Bridenbaugh, however, found that the rich land and mild climate enabled the colonists to produce an agricultural surplus.[10] The settlers turned to the sea not because they were failures as farmers, but rather because they were so successful that they needed an outlet for their produce. They marketed such goods as beans, hay, corn, fish, onions, and cider.[11] These products were shipped to colonies in British North America ranging from Connecticut to South Carolina and to the British West Indies as well. And despite various laws to the contrary, these and other goods were sent to Spanish, Dutch, and French colonies in the Caribbean. Rhode Island wood products such as boards, tar, timber, and fully-constructed barrels were also important items of trade.[12] Animals and animal products were also produced for export. Settlers in the Narragansett Country raised swine, sheep, and cattle and exported not only the live animals, but pork, mutton, beef, and lard.[13] Rhode Island was also well-known for its dairy products, with its cheese considered a special delicacy. Virtually every planter had at least one cheese house on his estate.[14] The South County residents also bred the famous Narragansett Pacer, a horse known throughout the New World for its easy gait which produced a smooth, comfortable ride. The Pacer was much in demand in the Caribbean and in North America, where good roads were rare and where an easy riding horse was highly appreciated.[15] Finally, to go along with their good food, the settlers of the Narragansett Country also produced rum.[16]

But good weather alone was not sufficient to produce this bounty, nor to make the planters of

the Narragansett Country so wealthy they were often compared with their fellows in Virginia, Maryland, and South Carolina. Sound management and a spirit of entrepreneurship were also essential. The heart of the Narragansett Country, called by Rhode Islanders the Pettaquamscutt Purchase, was obtained from the Narragansett Indians in 1658 by five such entrepreneurs. These men, four of whom were from Aquidneck Island (composed of present day Newport, Middletown, and Portsmouth) and the fifth from Boston, were shrewd businessmen, alert to the possibilities offered by a largely unsettled wilderness. They purchased a tract about 12 miles square for 151 pounds and unspecified "other reasons." They soon admitted two other members to their partnership with equal shares, and, after carving out 7,000 acres each for themselves, the Pettaquamscutt Purchasers offered the remainder of the land for sale.[17] Three hundred acres were set aside for the benefit of "orthodox" religion alone.[18]

The original purchasers sold off large tracts of land to Creole families such as their own, men who had either been born in the New World and understood its possibilities or had married into families who did. These families in turn became the founders of the plantation aristocracy that dominated South Country's economy for much of the eighteenth century. On May 26, 1663, the purchasers sold 1,000 acres to George Gardiner.[19] And in 1700 Rowland Robinson, who eventually came to own more than 3,000 acres in the Narragansett Country, purchased land. Along with the Gardiners and the Robinsons, the Hazards were also counted among the more wealthy and influential families of South County.[20] Other prominent families were the Coles, the Babcocks, the Potters, the Carpenters, the Congdons, the Champlins, and the Stantons.[21] Favored by the climate, secure in the belief they had nothing to fear from Amerindians, and in possession of considerable political influence, the planters prospered in the Narragansett Country. Many of the wealthier planters shipped goods directly from docks located on their own lands, either in one of the many little coves and inlets which dotted the western shore of the Bay, or along one of its many tributaries. The Hazards, for example, operated a shipyard on the west bank of the Pettaquamscutt River at the foot of Tower Hill.[22] Most planters, large and small, shipped their products through Newport. This created a need for a ferry system between the Narragansett Country and what was then called Rhode Island (present day Aquidneck Island). John Gardiner, of the influential Gardiner family, petitioned the authorities in 1748 to establish an additional ferry between Newport and South County because the existent ferries were "crowded with men, women, children, horses, hogs, sheep and cattle to the intolerable inconvenience, annoyance and delay of men and business."[23] In addition to their own produce, the Narragansett planters imported pork, grain, and wood products from other colonies, which they in turn sold outside Rhode Island.[24]

The existence of a black population in New England as early as the seventeenth century has been pretty much ignored.

But while climate and good management were necessary, labor was essential to the economic development of South County. The settlers of the Narragansett Country made use of labor from a variety of sources, but it was their slaves that made their society unique to New England. According to Woodward:

> The proprietors of Narragansett estates had much in common with the planters of the Southern colonies. Their mode of life had no equal in other country districts of the North. Unlike other New England farmers, they comprised a landed aristocracy of superior intellectuals and social status that lived somewhat after the manner of English squires in spacious homes on a comfortably affluent level. Their estates were maintained with slave labor and they depended mainly on export trade for marketing their produce. For this similarity the Narragansett country has been called "a bit of Virginia set down in New England."[25]

Like their counterparts in the South, this elite devoted little time to learning or to the arts, their greatest achievements coming in the law.[26] The Narragansett planters were also like Virginia and South Carolina squires in that their concern with the law was not a disinterested, abstract one, but rather arose from a pragmatic determination to bend it to their own needs. In this they were not unlike white men ruling over blacks in plantation societies elsewhere in the New World.[27]

In sum, an excellent climate, good management, men who were knowledgeable of the area, and a disciplined labor force served to produce not only a flourishing economic order, but a slave-holding, family-conscious aristocracy that was unique to New England. The political influence possessed by the planters and the alliances they formed with those who shared their religious beliefs facilitated the development of the South County economy. As was true in other parts of the New World, slavery and the plantation system it made possible rose and fell together in the Narragansett Country. Slavery in South County ran its course in the eighteenth century. Jones writes:

> South County planters in the first third of the century saw their wealth, influence, and prestige increase by leaps and bounds. . . . In the middle third of the century they were at the

apex of their influence. South County planters traded with a good part of the New World, exercised wide power to be reckoned with in New England, and were much respected by fellow Rhode Islanders. In the last third of the century their fortunes declined as the wars of the era proved as disruptive to their economy as to that of their fellow planters in the West Indies.[28]

By the end of the Revolutionary War, the economic system that made possible the unique planter lifestyle lay in ruins.

It was against this backdrop that the three races met and mingled along the western shore of Narragansett Bay. Long before the end of the eighteenth century, miscegenation had become a problem for New England settlers, who, if they had no clear idea of the nature of Africans, had even less understanding of the nature of the growing number of mulattos. Unlike blacks, who might be of African, Caribbean, or American birth, mulattos were usually born in the New World and were, therefore, not only racially distinct from Africans and Europeans but culturally distinct as well. The New England colonies recognized them as a separate group. Massachusetts made the first distinction between blacks and mulattos in 1693, Connecticut did so in 1704, and Rhode Island and New Hampshire followed in 1714.[29] In addition to sexual relations between blacks and whites, Native Americans and blacks also came together and produced children. Greene believes the lowly status assigned both groups in white-dominated New England served to erase any distinction between them, and, as they were common victims of oppression, they naturally drew together.[30] In any event, along the eastern seaboard there was a mixing of Native Americans, whites, and blacks during the colonial era.[31]

Unlike the Spaniards and the Portuguese, the Englishmen who settled New England were not accustomed to race mixture and so had not developed the elaborate racial hierarchy that characterized much of the rest of the New World.[32] Hence they were none too precise in the racial terminology they developed. While they freely borrowed the term "mulatto" from the Spaniards to refer to a person of mixed African and European ancestry, they used neither the Spanish term "mestizo" to refer to a person of mixed Native American and European ancestry, nor the term "zambo" to refer to a person of mixed Native American and African ancestry. In New England, and in some other British colonies along the Atlantic coast, the term "mestee" or "mustee" was sometimes applied to an individual whose ancestry was both Amerindian and black. The same term, however, was also sometimes applied to persons whom the Spaniards called "mestizos." The English never fully agreed on what to call persons of mixed Indian and European background. Race mixture was common in all the New England colonies, but only Massachusetts ever legally prohibited it, passing a law in 1706 that made illegal not only marriage between blacks and whites, but sex relations between them as well.[33]

Miscegenation was common in the Narragansett Country, scholars agreeing that the Narragansett Indians had considerable sexual contact with both whites and blacks.[34] The Indians were as unprepared for the cultural consequences of miscegenation as were blacks and whites, so that for a number of years it was not clear whether persons of mixed ancestry were members of the tribe. Woodward concludes that in the latter part of the eighteenth century "social lines between Indians and blacks became less distinct as inter-marriages multiplied."[35] And Boissevain claims that one of the consequences of the Narragansett's contact with both whites and blacks was that they lost their language by 1800.[36] The planter elite, having constructed a multi-racial labor force in the Narragansett Country, gradually became uneasy about both blacks and the Narragansett Indians. In 1726 a South Kingstown law forbade both racial groups to hold social gatherings and assemblages out of doors.[37]

Regardless of the law, Native Americans and blacks continued to meet in both public places and in private. James and Simonds agree that the resultant population was one of ill-defined racial status, but these men and women found a niche for themselves in the workplace of the Narragansett Country.[38] Thomas Walmsely (the name is variously spelled in the eighteenth century records), described as a "a mustee or at least an octoroon," married an Indian woman and not only had a small holding of his own and a slave but did odd jobs for the planter aristocracy.[39] Despite his mixed heritage, Walmsely apparently felt no especial sympathy for blacks and was willing to track down and return a fugitive slave.[40] While some blacks and members of the Narragansett tribe intermarried and freely associated with one another, there was no emergent sense that Indians and blacks ought to band together against whites. The two associated with one another in the workplace and elsewhere but did not create an ideology that might have enabled them to present a unified front against their white oppressors. In this they were no different from blacks and Amerindians in other parts of the colonial Americas.[41]

The Reverend Joseph Fish, a standing order minister from Connecticut who travelled to the Narragansett Country to preach to the Indians in the 1760s and early 1770s, reflected in his diary on the confusion of these Amerindians as the result of miscegenation.[42] Fish employed and worked with Joseph Deake to establish a school for the Narragansett. Deake, who was for a time schoolmaster, wrote Fish in December, 1765, to say there might be as many as 151 Indian children who were eligible for the

school. He continued, "Besides these there is a considerable Number of mixtures such as mulattos and mustees which the tribe Disowns."[43] Fish himself urged the Narragansett to make room for "Molattos" who lived with them and "to behave peaceably and friendly towards them, allowing their Children benefit of the School, if there was Room and the Master Leisure from tending Schollars of their own Tribe."[44] The Indians were divided over persons of mixed ancestry who were the children of the Narragansett and who lived with their parents and were loved by them yet were persons whom some tribal members sought to "disown." Fish noted that although he rode from Connecticut to teach the Indians, blacks, whites, and mixed bloods all attended his sermons.[45] Fish also candidly recorded observations of cross-racial sexual liaisons, such as the case of a "Molatto" named George, who in 1774 was living with an Indian woman who had at one time been married to the "king" of the Narragansett.[46]

While the planters of South County passed a law aimed at preventing blacks and Indians from conducting public meetings, apparently a law was never passed prohibiting their living together or marrying one another, nor did they prohibit whites and blacks from doing so. The Charlestown Council Record Book duly recorded, for example, that Iahue, described as the son of "Negro Will" of Charlestown, and Phelby, "a malatto woman of Westerly," had been married on November 5, 1753. Thomas Walmsley, a "mustee," was married to Elizabeth, an Indian.[47]

Despite the frequency with which red, white, and black intermarried or formed sexual liaisons with one another in the Narragansett Country, and despite their failure to agree upon a neatly ordered racial terminology, eighteenth century Rhode Islanders seem never to have become confused about the three original races. While there was much confusion about the intermediate peoples who were the result of miscegenation, residents of South County retained a clear sense of the racial identity and moral character of whites, Amerindians, and blacks.

Race, Work, and Acculturation

Miscegenation itself was common in the Narragansett Country because of the nature of the labor force. Although a Rhode Island law of 1652 prohibited both the enslavement of Indians and blacks, the rapid economic development of South County a half century later rendered the law a dead letter.[48] While the law was never formally repealed, subsequent laws concerning slavery, blacks, and the treatment of slaves made it clear it was no longer operative. Although slaves were the mainstay of the South County labor force, the planters supplemented them with Indians, mixed bloods, free blacks, and identured servants.[49] The richer landowners also got considerable work out of their tenants. The pragmatic entrepreneurs of the Narragansett Country took labor wherever they could find it, with the result that their work force was mixed, not only with regard to race but with regard to social status as well. There were also differences as to how long a person might work for a planter. Slaves worked, of course, for life, while indentured servants served a fixed number of years. Long-term informal employment was sometimes worked out between the planters and the Narragansett, mixed bloods, free blacks, and whites. Some persons simply worked for the day.

While other laborers were important in eighteenth century South County, slaves did the bulk of the work. According to Greene, blacks outnumbered white indentured servants by a ratio of eight to one.[50] Some of these slaves were house servants, but a close examination of the South County system reveals they were important in virtually every aspect of economic life.[51] Many of the slaves worked on the sheep and dairy farms in the region.[52] Slaves also bred horses, raised hogs and other live animals for sale, and helped to produce pork, butter, cheese, and wool. Slaves also worked as personal servants. Woodward found that in the wealthier families each family member had his own horse and usually an attendant to help him.[53] This slave would open gates and take charge of the horse when his owner wished to conduct business or enjoy a friendly visit.

Long before the end of the eighteenth century, miscegenation had become a problem for New England settlers, who, if they had no clear idea of the nature of Africans, had even less understanding of the nature of the growing number of mulattos.

Because the major trade of the Narragansett Country was conducted by means of the bay and the many streams that emptied into it, black men were often skilled boatmen. Slaves manned the ferries between South County and Newport, as well as the small boats that went up the rivers and streams to collect the products of smaller planters. Many of these same men were also engaged in coastal trade as far south as the Chesapeake where they used small ketches and sloops to go up the many shallow rivers and creeks of that area with Rhode Island goods.[54] Other black sailors, sometimes slaves but often free men, shipped out for distant ports in the West Indies. The sea had a powerful appeal for blacks in Rhode Island and in neighboring southeastern Massachusetts. Thanks to recent studies by Bolster and Wiggins, a clear understanding of the importance of seafaring in the lives of blacks in the early na-

tional period—particularly those who lived in coastal areas—is emerging.[55] There is reason to believe that these seagoing traditions rested on earlier choices made by black men in the eighteenth century. Greene concedes that seafaring occupations were attractive to many blacks, but claims that those who were free were reluctant to take long voyages to the South or to the Caribbean for fear they might be kidnapped and sold into slavery.[56] Granting this deterrent, many were willing to serve on the smaller vessels that did not sail too far.

> [The] clear impression remains that Narragansett Country slaves were not specialists, but were expected to master the wide range of skills involved in mixed farming. Neither were they common laborers, since many worked as carpenters, butchers, iron smiths, rope makers, tailors, distillers, bakers and blacksmiths.[57]

Slaves were trained in and were expected to perform all manner of tasks. This was as true for the women as it was for the men. Robert Hazard employed 24 female slaves in his dairy located in Boston Neck.[58] The female slaves on a working farm owned by the Reverend James MacSparran, an Angelic cleric who was shrewd enough to marry into the Gardiner family and who ministered in South County from 1733 to his death in 1751, worked at a wide variety of tasks. Not only did they perform such domestic chores as cooking, cleaning, serving meals, mending clothes, and working as personal servants to members of MacSparran's household, but

The Narragansett, blacks, and mixed bloods were attracted to those varieties of Christianity that promised them fair treatment and spiritual equality.

they also engaged in such seasonal activities as drying, pickling, and otherwise preserving foods for winter use in an age before refrigeration.[59] And the good reverend did not hesitate to put his female workers into the fields at planting time and at harvest time if the need arose.[60]

Because slaves, both men and women, were asked to work at a variety of tasks in South County, it is hardly surprising that whether African born, transported from the West Indies, or born in Rhode Island, they soon learned how the system worked. The Narragansett planters faced the same dilemma as slaveholders throughout the colonial Americas in that they needed to have their bondsmen sufficiently enculturated to be able to perform the work expected of them intelligently, but at the same time not so knowledgeable that they would become rivals to their white overlords. In general, the slaveowners' solution to this issue was to assign to slaves the production end of business and to reserve to themselves its marketing and managerial end. For the most part, this worked well, particularly in the production of such plantation crops as tobacco, sugar, cotton, and coffee, where slaves could be isolated into gangs, sometimes controlled by black drivers who would see that the workers labored diligently at their assigned task. Sometimes even this system broke down; for example, the skilled slaves who were responsible for turning raw cane into sugar had to know something of the product they were expected to produce. Wherever slaves were required to make decisions, whether closely supervised by whites or not, slavemasters had to provide them with more information than they gave a common laborer. Or, put in a slightly different way, they permitted blacks to become more acculturated into the emergent Euro-American system.

Colonists in Belize (formerly termed British Honduras), for example, relied heavily on slaves to locate the hardwood that constituted the main export of the settlement, cut it, and oversee its transportation back to the coast.[61] Under these circumstances, the settlers had no alternative but to share information with their slaves, even though they realized that with information, and success, would inevitably come political demands. There was no way to effectively eliminate the acculturation of blacks in the Americas; they saw mastery of information as the key first to escaping slavery and second to achieving success. The situation faced by the Narragansett planter was more difficult than that faced by planters in mono-crop, slave-based economies. Slaves in South County were involved in a variety of productive and other economic activities so that it was virtually impossible to keep them ignorant.

In Rhode Island the same owners who profited from slave labor and grew wealthy used their influence to see that laws were passed that barred slaves from entry into business. A 1750 South Kingstown law prohibited trading with a slave without permission of his master.[62] The law was typical of those enacted in other parts of the New World. In New York, for example, no slave could engage in trade without permission of his owner.[63] And even before the Scono Rebellion led to a tightening up of South Carolina's slave codes, a 1686 regulation forbade trade with slaves without permission of their owners.[64] Such prohibitions were not limited to slaves in English possessions. The black slave code of 1724 forbade slaves in French colonies to sell produce or other items without permission from their masters. The same regulation also stipulated that any property accumulated by bondsmen should be turned over when discovered to their owners.[65] South Kingstown laws went further: slaves were not only forbidden to participate in trade but were forbidden to own animals. According to Greene, upon pain of 31 lashes, no slave was permitted to own a pig,

a cow, or stock of any kind.[66] The fear, of course, was that if slaves were allowed to own stock, they would pilfer that of their owners and claim it as their own. The law itself demonstrates that black people were becoming enculturated into the system and knowledgeable of the ways in which it could be manipulated to their advantage.

Free blacks, of course, were exempt from the restrictions placed on slaves. The system of mixed labor in the Narragansett Country, which forced the planters to work with a few indentured servants and slaves, supplemented by occasional free labor, sometimes gave free blacks an advantage. They were able to hire on when needed and, if they had small holdings of their own, keep a few chickens, raise vegetables and fruits, and survive. While money was as important in eighteenth century South County as in other parts of the New World, the County apparently ran on a quasi-barter basis. While the Reverend MacSparran paid his neighbor, Thomas Walmsley, for his labor, he supplemented the cash with other items; in October of 1751 he sent Walmsley two barrels of cider.[67] The planters also occasionally lent their slaves to one another, particularly when an urgent task needed completing. South County slaveholders lent one another oxen, boats, and farm equipment and therefore saw nothing unusual in loaning one another slaves. The barter system and the lending of slaves back and forth created opportunities for bondsmen and bondswomen who were willing to use their working visits to learn more about the system.

Proof of the fact that blacks grasped the workings of the economy can be found in the successes enjoyed by a few free blacks. Greene observes that black Rhode Islanders were handicapped by insufficient credit, lack of training, and lack of experience in their attempts to operate successful, independent, business ventures.[68] Despite these difficulties and the growing racial prejudice of the period, numerous black freedmen were sufficiently successful as ferrymen, caterers, seamen, small farmers, and independent merchants to leave behind modest estates. Weeden found that Jack Howard, who died in 1745, left behind 145 pounds, while John Reed, who passed away in 1754, left 100 pounds to his heirs.[69] At his death in 1757, the estate of Andrew Frank was valued at more than 229 pounds.[70] Emmanuel Bernoon, who had been freed by one of the Huguenot settlers of South County, a group which had been literally driven from the region by religious bigotry, left behind an estate inventoried at 539 pounds in 1769.[71]

Of course not all fared so well. In 1729 the Rhode Island Assembly, finding that "great charge, trouble, and inconveniences had risen from" manumissions, declared that no slavemaster might in the future free a slave without posting 100 pounds. These monies were to be used to repay the town in which he resided in case the freedman should later depend on its charity for survival.

After Acculturation: Race, Religion, and Election Day

The nature of the labor force in South County, involving as it did free whites, indentured servants, Narragansett Indians, mixed bloods, and slaves (many of whom were themselves of mixed ancestry), resulted in a three-way acculturation process. Whites, Narragansett Indians (and other Native Americans who drifted into South County from neighboring areas), blacks, and mixed bloods learned from one another. Whites and blacks each learned from the Narragansett, who were generous in sharing their knowledge. Their generosity did not protect the Amerindians from being exploited by the settlers. Boissevain demonstrates that some Indians sold their land to the settlers because, lacking expertise in the English legal system, they became indebted to the colonists.[72] They sold their land to get out of debt. Indians who had no land to sell or who were unwilling to part with their land indentured themselves to whites as a way of paying off their debts.[73] Once the colonists had mastered their environment, come to grips with its possibilities, and created a working economic order, they had no further use of Narragansett expertise. They needed the Indians only for labor. Having rapidly taken on much of the emergent Euro-American culture, the Indians found various economic riches for themselves. For example, they achieved a special reputation for the construction of stone walls and were often hired to build them.

While the acculturation process involved all three races and their children of mixed ancestry, it was in no sense an equal one. Just as Indian knowledge was no longer needed by the settlers after the initial years, neither was black expertise especially valued. In the Caribbean, scholars generally agree that colonists, albeit grudgingly, came to accept the idea that blacks knew more about survival techniques in a hot climate than did whites.[74] But South County planters were not so receptive to black ideas. Of course, as is the case with pragmatic managers, they sometimes accepted suggestions from their slaves, but these were utilized only to the extent they were compatible with the European value system.

> *[The "Afro-Yankees" were] so little challenged by the barriers of Jim Crow common in the Midwest and the South, so lacking in strong black institutions, and so bereft of political clout that they were counted out of the racial struggle.*

While the three races influenced one another by virtue of their close contact and shared working conditions, Indians, mixed-bloods, and blacks each worked within the framework established by white folk. Mestees, "molattos," Indians, and blacks, for example, were drawn into Christianity. Unlike neighboring Connecticut and Massachusetts, Rhode Island had no established church that all residents of the colony were required by law to financially support. In South County Anglicans, Quakers, Baptists, and Congregationalists were all present, with the only divisions among the planter aristocracy coming along religious lines. In general, servants and slaves followed the religion of their masters, although this was not always the case. Some blacks (particularly those who were African born) and Indians clung to their traditional religions. But according to McLoughlin:

> Insofar as the [Great] Awakening did have an impact, it was upon the poor, especially among black slaves and Indians. God's freely offered, miraculous grace gave them new hope. It also opened the doors of the white man's churches and spoke of Christian equality under God. Church records of the time (1740s) indicated greatly increased black and Indian membership after the Awakening, but as these new members were admitted, many pastors wrote the words black or Indian after their names, indicating that equality before God did not mean social equality.[75]

The Narragansett, blacks, and mixed bloods were attracted to those varieties of Christianity that promised them fair treatment and spiritual equality. They were also attracted to those churches that emphasized the supernatural experience of becoming a Christian and de-emphasized formal learning. As a group, therefore, they tended to be attracted to "New Light" rather than "Old Light" churches. The Narragansett eventually formed their own separate church, one which they linked to other nearby Amerindian congregations such as those of the Mohegan, the Pequot, the western Niantic, and the Montauk.[76] All these tribes were converted at the time of the Great Awakening and established churches that laid more emphasis on other-world spiritual experience (itself a part of precontact Native American religion) then on learned study. For Native Americans, the Bible was not so much a book to be routinely drawn upon to illustrate theological arguments as it was a basis for visions and dialogue with supernatural figures, in the long-established Indian tradition.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, Rhode Island blacks also moved to establish separate black congregations, which were intended to embody their view of Christianity.[77] Greene, however, points out that despite the Great Awakening and vigorous attempts to bring blacks into the Christian fold, by the time of the American Revolution the majority of the slaves "were still heathen."[78] Even though some blacks remained outside Christianity, they were obviously influenced by the dominant, racially based, Christian faith. This influence made itself felt despite the fact that blacks were segregated in the eighteenth century churches of South County. According to Woodward, when Anglican St. Paul's decided to construct a wide balcony to accommodate an ever growing congregation, a separate section was reserved for the parish's slaves.[79] Greene found that blacks not only were segregated in the Christian churches in life, but in death as well, a segregated portion of church cemeteries being set aside for them.[80]

Just as the participation of blacks in the churches demonstrates the extent to which they had been enculturated into religion, so do the election day ceremonies demonstrate their mastery of the colonial Euro-American political process. On "Lection Day," the slaves elected their own officials. These men had little power, but the complex electioneering and the voting, held in Rhode Island annually on the third Saturday in June, illustrates the extent to which black Rhode Islanders understood the Anglo-American political process. The fact that the voting and accompanying festivities, including an all day picnic, games, drinking, a ball, and speeches, were supported by whites suggests that white Rhode Islanders regarded them as no threat to their own political hegemony.[81]

In sum, like the Narragansett Indians, the blacks of South County learned the ways of white folk. After the Revolution, with the Narragansett Country plantation system in ruin and slavery itself a doomed institution, black folk made their way from the Narragansett Country to Providence, Newport, and other areas in New England that were moving from an agricultural economy to a mercantile system and eventually to an industrial one. The descendants of South County blacks, knowledgeable of the way in which the white system worked, went on to establish independent black institutions such as the Free African Union Society, the African Benevolent Society, schools for black children, and independent black churches. Some of them participated in African colonization movements, others supported the spread of such Afro-American organizations as Prince Hall Free Masonry, and almost without exception black Rhode Islanders were strong supporters of abolition.

Conclusion

As was the case with most other blacks in New England, the Rhode Island people Cottrol has termed "Afro-Yankees"[82] seemed for generations so completely integrated into Euro-America, so little challenged by the barriers of Jim Crow com-

mon in the Midwest and the South, so lacking in strong black institutions, and so bereft of political clout that they were counted out of the racial struggle. Yet when called upon, they were not found wanting. When, in 1968, the tiny handful of black undergraduates at Brown University walked out of the university demanding that Brown increase the numbers of black faculty and students on its campus and expand its curriculum to include the teaching of the black experience, they did not have to walk far. They found housing, food, and political support in the Congdon Street Baptist Church, established in the nineteenth century by black Rhode Islanders.

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Book Review Essays

Black New England: Building on The Work of Lorenzo Johnston Greene

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The Afro-Yankees: Providence's Black Community in the Antebellum Era by Robert J. Cottrol (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1982)
Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Subculture in Eighteenth Century New England by William D. Piersen (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988)

With the death this spring of Dr. Lorenzo J. Greene, Professor Emeritus of History at Lincoln University (Missouri), historians of blacks in New England have lost one of their pioneers, a man who continued to support the scholarly study of Afro-Americans in the region throughout his life. Dr. Greene, who was 89 at his death, was best known as the author of *The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620-1776* (1942). Benjamin Quarles wrote of the book, "To it we are indebted for three things, if not more—for filling a gap in the literature of American colonial history, for portraying a hitherto neglected aspect of the Negro's role in our country's past and, finally, for presenting us with as fine an exhibition of the historian's craft as one could wish." Dr. Greene served for nearly half a century on the faculty of Lincoln, one of the nation's historically black colleges, and while in Missouri was in the vanguard of that state's civil rights movement. While much of Dr. Greene's scholarship in later years was centered on blacks in Missouri and in the nation as a whole, he continued to interest himself in New England blacks. He was actively involved in the work of the Parting Ways Museum of Afro-American Ethnohistory, based in Plymouth, Massachusetts, over the course of the early 1980s, and this work has helped to forge better understanding of black culture in southeastern Massachusetts.

Perhaps the most enduring legacy of Dr. Greene's work is the continued interest in the history of blacks in New England. Two recent books make important contributions to knowledge of black life in the region prior to the mid-point of the nineteenth century. The authors of these books, Robert Cottrol and William Piersens, agree that there were basically two patterns of black life in late colonial and early national New England. In one pattern black Yankees lived in isolation from one another on small farms and in tiny villages where there might not be other blacks for miles around. In his studies of blacks in Maine, Randolph Stakeman (forthcoming) has shown that perhaps as much as a third of black Mainers lived largely in isolation from all other blacks. But the other pattern of black life reflected the tendency of whites to concentrate blacks in certain areas, employing them at similar tasks. Stakeman found a sizeable concentration of Afro-Yankees in Portland, Maine, with other concentrations located in Maine's coastal towns. Cottrol found early eighteenth century Rhode Island blacks concentrated in Newport and on the plantations of the Narragansett Country. Following the American Revolution, as Providence surpassed Newport as a center of trade and began to industrialize, it became the center of black life. In Massachusetts, Boston was the home of the largest number of blacks, while in Connecticut on the eve of the Revolution blacks were concentrated in such coastal towns as New London, Stonington, and Lyme.

These concentrations of black people, as Cottrol and Piersen clearly demonstrate, made it possible for black people to come together, to create a social life, and to form, establish, and support black institutions. Before black Yankees could move to create organizations, however, they had to doubly emancipate themselves from white folk. They first had to win their freedom; but even when that was accomplished, Afro-Yankees still had to escape from white households. For all of the colonial period and into the early national period, blacks tended to live with white families, as domestic servants, as apprentices to a trade, or as employees. Data gathered by Cottrol in *The Afro-Yankees* show that as late as 1800 only 38% of Providence blacks lived in households headed by blacks. In other words, despite the concentration of blacks in such commercial centers as Providence, they did not live in separate black communities. This fact made it difficult for New England blacks to escape the influence of white folk and to construct separate institutions of their own. Recent studies of slavery (Gary A. Puckrein, *Little England: Plantation Society and Anglo-Barbadian Politics*, 1984; David Barry Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels: A Study of Master-Slave Relations in Antiqua*, 1985; Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake*, 1986; Mechal Sobel, *The World they Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth Century Virginia*, 1987) reveal that even in those areas where blacks made up a large percentage of the population the construction of a separate black culture and black institutions was more difficult than the historical scholarship of the 1970s suggests.

One of the most effective barriers to black acceptance of white ideology was the attitude of white folk themselves. As Robert Twombly and Robert H. Moore show in their 1967 article, "Black Puritan:

The Negro in Seventeenth Century Massachusetts," white residents of the Bay Colony, increasingly uncomfortable with blacks as the seventeenth century drew to an end, gradually began to pass laws aimed at better controlling black behavior. Piersen points out that black Yankees developed a derisive folklore that mocked what blacks saw as pompous pretension among whites in their attempts to dominate Afro-Americans.

Other aspects of white life, Cottrol and Piersen agree, blacks found less amusing. While many black Yankees became Christians, others objected to the growing eighteenth-century tendency among New England's whites to segregate the Lord's House. Blacks were relegated either to the rear of churches or to balconies specially constructed for them. According to Cottrol, some Providence blacks scornfully referred to these separate seats as "pigeon holes." Later, Providence blacks were to term the section "Nigger heaven" and refuse to attend segregated churches. Cottrol offers detail on the evolution of Providence's black churches, formed for the most part by black Christians who would accept neither segregation nor exclusion from the governance of their congregations. Piersen argues that Christianity was not in harmony with the emotional and intellectual needs of black folk. As Piersen sees it, even those blacks who were born in New England continued to be influenced by West African religious beliefs. Rhett Jones' 1986 article, "Plantation Slavery in the Narragansett Country of Rhode Island," concludes that while many blacks attended church in southern Rhode Island, many others did not and were believed by whites to practice non-Christian rituals.

In addition to exploring such issues as black Yankee demographics, community formation, folklore, and family life, Cottrol and Piersen also examine the roots of black political thought in the region, the election of black officials, the meaning of slavery, and black mastery of the rhetoric of the American Revolution. Together Cottrol and Piersen make excellent contributions to the expanding knowledge of Afro-Yankees, contributions in the finest tradition of scholarship established by Lorenzo Greene.

Tri-Racial Enculturation: Red, White, and Black in The South

by
Rhett S. Jones
Brown University

The Cherokee Ghost Dance: Essays on the Southeastern Indians, 1789-1861 by William G. McLoughlin (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984)
White Society in the Antebellum South by Bruce Collins (New York: Longman, 1985)
Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage by William Loren Katz (New York: Atheneum, 1986)

In an essay published in *The Western Journal of Black Studies* (1977) I pointed out that while for many years the study of relations between blacks and Native Americans had been neglected by historians and other scholars, recent studies had acknowledged that red folk and black often influenced one another. What I did not point out was that, for the United States, studies of tri-racial contact were almost nonexistent. Things were quite different in studies of Latin America where the realities of social and sexual contact among all three races were reflected not only in works by historians but in those of anthropologists and others. Unfortunately, students of the United States and the 13 colonies that preceded its formation have, until recently, tended to focus either on black/white relations or on relations between whites and Amerindians. Seldom have they coped with the complex reality that all three races were present from the seventeenth century English settlements on. To discuss only one race or the relations between any two is to distort the past.

Each of these recently published books is notable for three reasons. First, each has approached southern history by recognizing that three races were present, each conscious of and influenced by the other two. Second, in very different ways, each author is influenced by the values, normative expectations, and behavior of the other two. Third, each traces the evolution of tri-racial enculturation through time. All conclude relations among the three and their mixed blood offspring races were quite different in the mid-nineteenth century than they had been 200 years earlier.

Beyond that the works are quite different. William McLoughlin, a long-time student of relations between the Cherokee, their black slaves, and whites, perhaps offers the most balanced account. McLoughlin, who has published three other book-length works on the slaveholding Cherokee, places their changing relations with their black bondsmen

in the context of their relationship with the white South. While on balance it is fair to say the Cherokee agonized more over the treatment of black folk than did the Choctaw and Creek, it is clear they were never so protective of blacks who lived among them as were the Seminole. Using primary sources, McLoughlin shows that the Cherokee debated the treatment of blacks and, while many of them gradually adopted white racism, there were always Cherokee who sought fair treatment for blacks. Collins, on the other hand, tends to regard both blacks and Indians as objects. By defeating the Indians and enslaving the blacks, as Collins sees it, white southerners were able to find themselves. There is nothing particularly new in this argument: Joel Kovel, in *White Racism: A Psychohistory* (1970), argues that white people found themselves by defining and controlling the black other. Collins' argument differs from that of Kovel in that he includes Indians as well as blacks in tracing the development of southern self-conception. The sensitivity McLoughlin brings to study of all three races, Collins reserves for whites.

It would be unfair, however, to suggest that Collins oversimplifies either the Afro-American or the Amerindian experience. Although he writes as an apologist for white folk, he not only recognizes there were differences among whites, but carefully traces differences among Native American and black Americans as well. Part of the problem in understanding the tri-racial encounter, as Collins rightly sees it, is that not one of the three races was unified. By the 1850s, Collins argues, opposition to slavery had been wiped out in the South, and there were few white southerners prepared to defend the Indians. But at least through the 1830s, Collins shows, there were Euro-Americans who fought for just treatment of Native Americans.

McLoughlin, Collins, and Katz all agree that the decade of the 1820s to 1830s was the crucial one in the South. In this period whites firmly repudiated the implications of revolutionary ideology in deciding the United States was to be a democracy for white men only, that Indians were to be moved west of the Mississippi, and blacks were to be enslaved. Andrew Jackson, celebrated by generations of Euro-American historians as the symbol of democracy for the common man, built his reputation among his fellow whites by killing Indians. During the same period state after state in both the South and North placed restrictions on free blacks.

This public spectacle of a self-celebrated free people declaring that other races had no democratic rights is an invitation to write a morality play, and that is just what Katz has done. Despite his careful use of scholarly sources, Katz's *Black Indians* was written for young people and is found in the juvenile section of most libraries. In seeking to restore what he calls "hidden heritage," that is knowledge of the cultural and biological intermingling of blacks and Indians through three centuries, Katz makes a contribution to history for both young and old. The many photographs Katz provides offer graphic proof of the mating of Africans and Native Americans in the New World. His brief discussion of the cultural similarities between Native Americans and Africans, while it is not as complex as those provided by Maya Deren's *Divine Horsemen: The Voodoo Gods of Haiti* (1970), or Roger Bastide's *The African Religions of Brazil* (1960), nevertheless offers some provocative hypotheses. Katz's central problem is that in his attempts to dramatize his findings for young people, he presents whites primarily as villains determined to drive Indians from their lands and use blacks as slaves. While Katz provides a useful alternative to the Eurocentric history most young Americans read in school, he does so at the cost of ignoring—with some few exceptions—those whites who did not accept negative ideas concerning red folk and black.

While the center of these three books is the old South, all also give considerable attention to blacks, whites, and reds in the West and to a lesser extent those in the North. Together they provide an interesting overview of tri-racial contact and enculturation.

Sports Notes

by
Wornie L. Reed

Myths

Another racial myth came tumbling down in the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea. Blacks had never before been prominent in swimming competitions at the national level in the United States or at the international level. Several theories about the bone structure and body mass of black people have been offered to explain the absence of blacks on the victory stands at these top competitive levels. But at the 1988 Olympics Anthony Nesty, a black man from Surinam (South America), bested Matt Biondi, swimming's golden boy in those Olympics, to win the 100-meter butterfly.

Nesty's feat brings to mind the situation in distance running before the 1960 Olympics. Prior to these games Jimmy-the-Greek type explanations of racial differences in body type were used to explain the black dominance in the sprints and the lack of success by blacks in distance races. However, at the Rome Olympics in 1960, Abebe Bikila of Ethiopia, running barefooted, shocked the world by winning the heralded marathon and breaking the Olympic record by more than eight minutes.

Not even breathing hard at the finish, he explained, "The marathon distance is nothing for me. I could have kept going and gone around the course another time without difficulty. We train in shoes, but it's more comfortable to run without them." In Tokyo in 1964, Bikila set a world record in winning the marathon, this time wearing shoes. Again he was not breathing hard as he followed up his finish with a jog to the infield where he did knee bends, bicycle kicks and other calisthenics.

What Bikila started in 1964 escalated rapidly to the point where Africans won each of the five distance races in the World's Track Meet in 1987, finished first and second in the 1988 Boston Men's Marathon, and won four of the five distance races in the 1988 Olympics. Nowadays we hear no more talk of the black physique being unsuited for distance running.

Money

In many instances salaried black athletic stars have kept a close pace in salary with white stars. However, in off-the-field income—principally commercial endorsements—black athletes are not even close. For example, a month after the 1988 Olympics Jackie Joyner-Kersee, the record setting heptathlete, had not received a single new endorsement offer. Joyner-Kersee, winner of the long jump as well as the heptathlon in the 1988 Olympics, so outclassed her competitors that in the heptathlon she competed against her own world records and the 7,000 point mark which she is the only person to exceed.

She has won numerous national awards and is heralded by many sportswriters and other experts as the greatest woman athlete in the world. This young woman, who is the quintessential public figure and role model, who also happens to be black, has provoked little commercial interest. White stars of this magnitude have always been able to cash in on their Olympic feats.

This endorsement snub of Joyner-Kersee was a consistent way to end a year that began with the heroics of quarterback Doug Williams in the Superbowl. He shouted "I'm going to Disney World!" into the camera and was paid handsomely for that but he did not get much more—in stark contrast to the endorsements that went to the previous Superbowl hero, Phil Simms. The white quarterback of the New York Giants was reported to have received some $2 million in endorsements.

Stemming the Tide

Those who have been wondering what organized response there might be to the domination of college basketball by blacks received their answer on January 11, 1988, when the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) approved Proposition 42, prohibiting prospective freshmen athletes from receiving athletic scholarships. Such a rule would disproportionately affect black athletes, who have poorer academic training in high school and less ability to pay their way during the first year of college.

In the early 1970s the popularity of professional basketball in the National Basketball Association (NBA) decreased as the popularity of college basketball increased. The popularity of the NBA decreased despite the increasing virtuosity of the players. As the popularity of college basketball increased, college basketball was also becoming "black."

Several theories about the bone structure and body mass of black people have been offered to explain the absence of blacks on the victory stands at these top competitive levels.

In 1983 the NCAA voted in Proposition 48, which stiffened the admissions requirements for athletes. Proposition 48 stipulated that a scholarship freshman could not play on the team if he did not have a C-average from high school, or if he scored less than 700 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or less than 15 on the American College Test (ACT). However, Proposition 48 allowed a freshman to receive aid if he met either the C-average requirement or the minimum score on either of the college board exams. Proposition 42, an amendment to

In many instances salaried black athletic stars have kept a close pace in salary with white stars. However, in off-the-field income—principally commercial endorsements—black athletes are not even close.

Proposition 48, takes Prop 48 a step further. It would prevent a Prop 48 athlete from receiving a scholarship at all during his freshman year. Since approximately nine out of ten Prop 48 student-athletes are black, this means that blacks would be predominately affected.

Admittedly, these admission requirements are quite low, and it is difficult to argue against improving the quality of education of the student-athletes, but it is also difficult to understand how a new rule that accepts the admission of students to college but withholds their scholarship aid is anything but a means of accomplishing some other objective. Please note that non-athletes often enter college with these low-threshold academic qualifications. This action is addressed only at certain student-athletes, 90% of whom are black. Some individuals have argued that the presence of two black quarterbacks leading the two top-rated college football teams in the Fiesta Bowl this year was the straw that broke the camel's back.

Two of the more prominent black college basketball coaches, John Thompson of Georgetown and John Chaney of Temple, have taken strong stances against Prop 42. Thompson reacted with press conferences, public and private pressure, and with personal boycotts; and John Chaney has described the vote as intentional racism. It is difficult to see it any other way.

News and Notes

Two senior scholars have joined the William Monroe Trotter Institute as visiting Resident Fellows for the 1988-89 academic year: Dr. Vévé A. Clark and Dr. Wilbur H. Watson.

Dr. Vévé A. Clark is Associate Professor of African and Caribbean Literature in the Department of Romance Languages at Tufts University. She received her B.A. and M.A. degrees at Queens College in New York, the Certificate d'etudes superieures from the Universite de Nancy, France, and a Ph.D. in French and Ethnology of the Caribbean from the University of California at Berkeley. Before coming to Tufts she was a lecturer at UC-Berkeley, where she was rated among the top 25 instructors on campus.

Among Dr. Clark's publications are the following books: *Kaiso! Katherine Dunham: An Anthology of Writings* (1978), *The Legend of Maya Deren: A Biography and Collected Works in Three Volumes* (1985), and *Fieldhands to Stagehands: An Archaeology of Haitian Folk Performance and Popular Theatre* (forthcoming).

At the Trotter Institute this year she is working on a book with the tentative title, *Learning Disorder: Education and the Discourse of Social Change in Francophone Black Literature,* which is a critical study of selected prose by 15 novelists from the Francophone Caribbean in which divergent traditions represented by elite and folk educational systems influence the discourse of the various authors' work. She is also teaching a course entitled Social Change through Education in the Black Studies Department at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Dr. VéVé A. Clark

Dr. Wilbur H. Watson

Dr. Wilbur H. Watson is the Edmund A. Ware Professor of Sociology at Atlanta University, where he is also Chairperson of the Department of Sociology and Director of the Center on Health and Aging. As Chairperson of the Department of Sociology, he is editor of *Phylon,* the journal on race and culture founded by W.E.B. DuBois.

Dr. Watson received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from Kent State University and a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. He has held positions at Kent State University, Cheney State College, Rutgers University, Temple University, and Morgan State University. He was also Research Director for the National Center on Black Aged, 1977-1980. His previous positions in professional societies include President of the Association of Black Sociologists and President of the Association for Gerontology and Human Development in Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Dr. Watson was founding editor of *The Black Sociologist* and is currently the series editor for Black Classics of Social Science for Transaction Books Press. He is the author of numerous scholarly publications, including the following books: *Human Aging and Dying: A Study in Sociocultural Gerontology* (1977, with Robert J. Maxwell), *Stress and Old Age: A Case Study of Black Aging and Transplantation Shock* (1980), *Aging and Social Behavior: An Introduction to Social Gerontology* (1982), and *Black Folk Medicine: On the Therapeutic Significance of Faith and Trust* (1984).

At the Trotter Institute this year Dr. Watson is working on a major study on race and gender in the practice of medicine in the United States between 1896 and 1954 as well as teaching in the Gerontology Department at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

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